

CANADIANS FOR THE POLE.

CAPT BERNIER WILL START NORTH ON JUNE FIRST NEXT.

He Will Follow Nansen's Course, But Will Sail on a Steel Ship, and Will Adopt Innovations Which He Claims Will Bring Success.

The first distinctively Canadian expedition in search of the North Pole will probably set out for the Arctic next year. It will be commanded by Capt. Bernier, of Quebec, an old-time navigator, than whom no Arctic explorer was ever more confident of achieving his self-imposed task. The captain's plan includes several novel propositions for facilitating his reach of the desired goal. A seafaring man from his youth and a captain of many years' experience and of wonderful success in his vocation, the study of the great problem of Arctic exploration has been the hobby of his life. He is of French-Canadian extraction, and confident of his ability to plant the flag of the Empire and the arms of his native country upon the exact end of the world's imaginary axis. The captain has promise of generous Canadian aid for his expedition, and has gone to England to interview Sir Clements Markham, president of the Royal Geographical Society, on the project, and also to make arrangements for the construction of a new ship. It will be decided in England whether this vessel is to be of wood or malleable steel; that is, the Siemens-Martin mild steel.

A STEEL SHIP.

The experience of Nansen's Fram makes the captain rather unfavorable to a wooden ship, because of the fears that that vessel engendered among her crew when in the ice floes. His preference is for a steel ship, the sides of which can be so heated from within that she will avoid the evil effects of ice pressure and being shaped like the Fram will readily rise from the pressure of opposing ice floes. Capt. Bernier estimates the total cost of the expedition at from \$80,000 to \$90,000, of which \$45,000 to \$50,000 will be required for the vessel and its outfit. He gives his own services free.

Sir Clements Markham has already declared that another expedition ought to continue Nansen's work, taking the drifting ice further to the east than he did, in which case he believes it would float over or nearly over the pole. Bernier does not share the belief of some that there is any extent of land in the neighborhood of the pole, that would interfere with the regular drift of the Arctic ice. He declares it unreasonable to believe that there is other than deep water in the vicinity of the pole, when 300 miles south of it in the direction of Greenland, the depth of water is from 1,800 to 2,000 fathoms.

TO START JUNE 1.

Capt. Bernier proposes to set out on his voyage about June 1, leaving Vancouver for Behring Straits, accompanied by a crew of twelve, all possessed of special scientific attainments. The coast of Siberia will be followed as far as the new Siberian Islands, the expedition passing to the west of them to survey Sannikov Land and to finish the survey of North Bennett Island commenced by the Jeannette's crew. There the opportunity will be watched for in the late period of navigation, to proceed to the north of the Jeannette's Arctic position through one of the north-easterly openings in the ice that are always found to exist about October. The winter quarters of the ship will be about 500 miles from the pole. Here the explorers will slaughter the live stock brought with them for food and store the flesh in a depot on the ice alongside of the ship, against the time when there will be nothing to kill around them. In the latitude where the first winter will be passed, the explorers expect to kill large quantities of bear, seal and walrus, not only for current use, but also to add to their reserve stores.

A DRIFTING MATCH.

All this time the captain expects to be gradually nearing the pole, carried toward it by the drift of the ice in which the vessel and attendant camps will be imbedded, or upon the surface of which they will be borne. So gradual is the drift and so slow will be the progress of the party that they only expect to reach the pole during the third summer of their absence from home. It may not be possible for the expedition to take the drift ice far enough to the east to be sure of passing directly over the pole, because of the westerly drift. In order to counteract this, however, a series of observation stations will be established on the ice,

ten miles apart, and stretching away due east of the main camp. These observation camps will constitute one of the main features of the expedition. Not only will they be sighted from one another, but they will be connected by telephonic communication, supplemented by a system of wireless telegraphy. The flagstaffs of these stations will be composed of hollow aluminum pipes, two to three inches in diameter, containing emergency supplies of food. These pipes will be eighteen feet high. Each station will be supplied with self-registering thermometer and barometer. Five of them at least are to be established, and if this eastward extension of communication for fifty miles is found, by observation, to be sufficient for overcoming the westward drift, the number and extension of these observation stations can readily be increased, so that the passage of at least a portion of the party immediately over the pole may be definitely accomplished.

BALLOONS TO BE RELEASED.

Small balloons with records of the expedition's progress will be released at monthly or fortnightly intervals, and each succeeding balloon will contain the record entrusted to former ones, to provide against the loss of any. Each will be furnished with twenty days' supply of hydrogen. To avoid evaporation they will be so freighted as to be imprisoned in the cold air near the surface of the sea, and Capt. Bernier is convinced that the prevailing currents of air will carry them first to the south and then east. Boats for use in cases of emergency will be taken out in sections.

The expedition expects to return by way of Spitzbergen. Judging by the facts that the polar basin has a higher level than either the Pacific or the Atlantic ocean, that the latter is lower than the Pacific, and that the cold winds of the polar basin help the ice and water thence on the way to the North Atlantic to feed the evaporation always going on there, Capt. Bernier believes it now to be nothing more than a matter of time and patience until he shall have passed directly over the pole and returned safely home to tell the story of the expedition. At first his only anxiety was as to the possibility of reaching the mouth of the river Lena from Behring Straits. Dr. Nansen writes him that he has no doubts that he can easily do so. Prof. Norden-sköld, who reached the polar sea via Behring Straits from Stockholm, also writes encouragingly.

The Royal Society of Canada and the Quebec Geographical Society have endorsed Capt. Bernier's plans. So has J. W. Tyrrell, the explorer of the barren lands and the chairman of the Committee on Polar Researches of the Ontario Land Surveyors' Association, who says: "I believe you are on the right track to success." Dr. G. M. Dawson, director of the Geological Survey of Canada, writes: "The recent voyage of the Fram seems to indicate that an expedition carried out along the line of Capt. Bernier's project, if properly equipped and manned, would have every probability of a successful issue." And Dr. Bell, the assistant Director-General of Dominion Surveys, supplements the above with the following: "I think you have chosen the best course and the best method, and that if you follow out these plans you will succeed."

PROVISIONS DEARER IN ENGLAND.

Big Advance Over Last Year's Prices—Jam Alone is Cheaper.

It costs a good deal more to live to-day than it did twelve months ago. Mr. William Alstrom, of Kimberley road, Nunhead, the general secretary of the newly formed London Coffee and Eating House Keepers' association, estimates that £1 will purchase no more food now than 15s would a year ago.

"For instance," he said to a London Daily Mail representative, "meat has gone up 18 per cent. in price, flour 15 per cent., sugar 7-1-2 per cent., tea 12-1-2 per cent., eggs 15 per cent., bacon 30 per cent., currants as much as 220 per cent., raisins 80 per cent., sultanas 60 per cent., butter 71-2 per cent., lard 15 per cent., and even such accessories as mustard and vinegar have increased in price.

"The coffee house keepers have been obliged to raise their prices, for they saw insolvency looming ahead. A large number have banded themselves together and resolved to sell no more halfpenny cups of tea, no more halfpenny boiled or fried eggs, no plate of hot meat under 5d, no plate of cold meat for less than 3d and no puddings at less than 4d each. "Why, even our crockery has gone up 20 per cent.," added the general secretary, "and as for coal and gas, everybody knows what a huge increase has taken place in the prices of these necessities. What has gone down? The only thing that is cheaper is jam."

LI HUNG CHANG'S DOMAIN.

IT IS IN THE SOUTH OF CHINA AND IS FAIR AND FERTILE.

The Canton District Very Different From the Central and Northern Provinces—Speak a Different Language.

What strikes an observer most about China and the Chinese is that suddenly a veil has been rent from a vast organism, which up to the present half-century had remained exclusive self-contained and repellent to all external influence and all modern knowledge. Not only is the type of civilization vastly different, but the mind is of another cast, the idea of a separate order. Inference is the key to Chinese character and Chinese intercourse, but a foreigner, however long he may dwell in the country, never quite makes out what a native is driving at from anything he says or does. To save "face" even a coolie will forge and fabricate a dozen times. From this point of view "correctitude" is all in all, and it is far worse for him and his to lose "face" than to lie through thick and thin.

Up the French river the French priests allege that their work is practically fruitless. In fact, the two provinces, of which Canton is the capital are sunk deep in the curious compound of spiritualistic materialism. These southern people speak a language radically different from that of the middle and northern provinces, even though "within the four seas all men are brethren."

THE CANTONESE DIALECT.

Cantonese is a dialect of which hardly a word is understood in other parts and the officials always employ interpreters in their intercourse with the natives. When the magistrate takes his seat in the yamen a bell summons his interpreter, almost as in our East End police court. The land they live in is fair and fertile. Along the course of the west river and its myriad of creeks and tributaries the soil is bountifully fed with the alluvial mud the river brings down, for at Wuchau the rise at flood time is as much as fifty feet in an average year. Great fields of mulberry stretch out on all sides, looking exactly like a vast plantation of thin hop-poles and from them is taken the autumn harvest of silk cocoons, which go to fill the hundred and forty odd filatures of the Canton district and a multitude of home industries all through the province. Interspersed with the silk trees are thick patches of sugar-cane, and everywhere you walk by the "paddy-field," which supplies the food in which the heart of the Chinese rejoices. Ranges of green and tawny hills, the bamboo grass contrasting with the bare strips of red sandstone, come down in places almost to the water's edge, and are, at most, but five or six miles distant, never rising to the grandeur of a mountain range, but of sufficient height to give an impressive splendor to the pleasant scenery.

PLACES OF WORSHIP.

Temples and Buddhist monasteries are planted about the clefts and fissures of the hills. In the south, as one might expect from the parallel of Europe, the buildings display brighter colors and more ornate decorations than in the sombre north. The lines of the arch are straight and stiff, but upon them is set every sort of grotesque animal and figure that occurs to the limited scope of Chinese imagination. Inside the courts of the "joss house" the figures of the Chinese theogony are more plentifully bedecked with tinsel and brass and colours than they are on the Yangtse. No temple is without its gilding, but in the south there are no signs of a more frequent application of gold leaf than in the dingy recesses of northern gloom. To re-gild a temple is accounted a work of holiness, which is set down on the credit side of the account when the dead man's spirit is seized by the infernal lictors and taken before Kuang-Ti to be submitted to the unpleasant interrogations of the court below. There are opportunities in plenty of fire insurance of this kind, because the Chinese find it very hard to keep their hands off fresh gilt when it can be turned to the purposes of personal profit.

At Canton there is a famous temple, the sides of which are lined with brass and gilded figures in a sitting posture, to the number of 408, representing the various incarnations of the great Buddha. The long rows are impressive and bewildering, even though they do not suggest more than a curious

GALLERY OF FAMILY STATUES.—something like busts of a patrician family in old Rome—but a common peculiarity is that, while the bodies have worn their color to a rich

bronze, the hands are nearly all as bright as new gold. The explanation is that the adventurous coolie is always appropriating the hands for the secular purposes of trade, and consequently the priests are continually replacing them. Such a sacrilege excites no surprise in a country where the priests themselves are ever ready to sell the holiest of holies, and where silver is replaced by pewter and bronze by iron every day of the week. The only reason that a bonza in a Yangtse temple gave for not disposing of an ancient incense burner was that if he did, the people would rise and kill him. Personally, he had no objections. He believed in the saying, "The imagemaker does not worship Buddha; he knows too much about the idol." Just as these temples are cleaner and richer in the southern provinces than elsewhere, save in Szechuan, so the private houses are of a finer and more substantial build.

In Kwangtung many of them stand out by themselves.

LIKE AN ENGLISH FARM.

with strong walls surrounding well-kept, one-storied dwelling rooms, and the blue brick, made at the many brickfields, which line the banks, is far more durable and cohesive than the unbaked mud that does duty for it in so many other parts. The roofs, too, are neatly tiled, and fit to resist the full fury of tropical storms. It is not only the detached house which is thus superior. All along the lower reaches the villages, which thrive and batten upon the production of silk have an air of permanent prosperity, that, as contrasted with the pitiful poverty of so much that one sees elsewhere strikes a pleasant contrast. In their festivals and solemn sacraments they make a parade and effect which have something of Indian gorgeousness about them. Above Samshui, on the southern bank, I saw a municipal procession winding in and out of the waving clumps of feathery bamboo that in the distance, at any rate, was a pretty moving picture. A band of musicians in scarlet garments led the way before a whole army of tablet bearers, who proclaimed the virtues of the illustrious dead. Above them floated the standard of the mandarins, and in the centre was a huge, serpent made up in pantomimic fashion, of painted matting hung upon a framework supported by a number of unseen "supers" who waggled and twisted in the orthodox way. Behind came priests and coolies and in the place of honour were mounted officials, with their red umbrellas of office borne before them. At close quarters all this would have been tawdry enough, but, seen in the bright sunlight, with the background of red sandstone, fringed by the most graceful of tropical trees, it was not only curious—it was most beautiful.

SUPERSTITIOUS WOMEN.

They Place a Great Deal of Confidence in Dream.

It doesn't seem possible that in this enlightened age superstition could be rife among the educated, but there are nevertheless a number of young women who converse fluently if not eloquently in three languages, and who read Spencer and Browning and Emerson, but who place a dream-book with their Bible on the table beside the bed and consult it in the morning the first thing.

With a credulity worthy a darky mammy if their sleep has been visited with unusual visions, they seize this volume as soon as their eyes are fairly opened and look for an explanation. If misfortune is foretold by it, the seeker after knowledge assumes a bravado she is far from feeling.

"I don't care," she says, to herself, by way of bolstering up her courage, "I'm not superstitious anyway, and I don't believe in sucharrant nonsense." But she's nervous just the same, for a couple of days, until other troubles have driven this mythical one out of her mind.

There's one young woman known to the writer who never dreams of a young child without shivering and sharking for days after, in fear of some dreadful thing happening to her. She has not consulted a dreambook on the subject, and so she doesn't know how infants and bad luck became connected in her mind, but, nevertheless, after she's had a visitant of this sort while sleeping, she says prayers of unusual length and then makes up her mind to be patient under afflictions sore.

She's an intelligent woman, mind you, but she doesn't attempt to explain the terror that besets her at this particular dream.

She doesn't call herself superstitious, of course no woman does, not even the one who won't walk under a ladder, but her friends do, and make light of her until she exposes some felicity of theirs, when the subject is carefully avoided afterward.

AN ARISTOCRATIC CLERK.

LORD FAIRFAX WORKS IN A NEW YORK BANK.

Intends to Restore the Glories of His House—Such is the Ambition of the Young Nobleman Who Wishes to Become a Banker With This Object.

Every work day morning at 9 o'clock a handsome young man, tall, erect and dressed in deep mourning, enters the counting room of Brown Bros. & Co., at 59 Wall St., New York, and takes his position behind a desk, with a score of other clerks. In a few minutes he is immersed in the business of the big firm.

If this young man was a resident of Scotland, where his ancestors lived, he would be addressed as "your Lordship." In New York he is simply Mr. Fairfax. In reality he is the only American citizen who can rightfully use the title of Lord. He is Albert Kirby Fairfax, otherwise Baron Fairfax, of Cameron, to which title he succeeded upon the death of his father a few weeks ago.

Young Lord Fairfax, who is the twelfth Baron, and is the oldest son of the late Baron John Coutell Fairfax, of Northampton, Prince George county, Md., was born in 1870. In appearance he is much younger. This may be in a measure due to his light silken hair, which, with an unusually pallid complexion and deep blue eyes, suggest the Saxon.

FAIRFAX UNMARRIED.

Lord Fairfax is unmarried. His brother, Charles Edmond, is the next in line of succession. Like his father, the present Lord is unaffected and modest to a degree. He is plain in dress and quiet in manner. He is much like other young men of his age and similar pursuit in life, save that his manner is unusually reserved, and in his quiet dignity the real gentleman is ever apparent. How some young men with far more money than Lord Fairfax would revel in his title and ancestry!

The Fairfax peerage dates from 1627. It was Thomas, the sixth Baron of that line, who left Scotland and settled in Virginia in 1739. He had inherited a tract of about 6,000,000 acres of land, called the Northern Neck, between the Rappahannock and Potomac rivers. Upon this vast estate he erected two mansions, Bevoir and Greenway Court, where he lived for years in state in true baronial fashion.

Northampton, the present home of the Fairfax family, is a tract of land of about 700 acres, which the late Lord Fairfax purchased from the descendants of former Governor Spriggs, of Maryland. The property was at one time a part of a tract owned by Lord Baltimore.

AN OLD HOUSE.

The old house on the plantation is over 150 years old. In it the present Lord Fairfax and his sisters and brothers, Sister Mary Cecilia, of New York; Mrs. Tunstall Smith, of Baltimore; and two daughters who have never left their ancestral home—Carolina Snowden and Frances Mervin Fairfax—and his brother, Charles Edmond Fairfax, were born. It is a quaint old structure for a baronial home. It has a frontage of over 100 feet and is about 30 feet deep, with a great wide hallway running through the middle. Surrounding this house are numerous others, barns and servants' houses, while venerable trees and foliage shade the grounds for acres.

There are many quaint relics in the possession of the Fairfax family. Old heirlooms, family portraits of former lords and ladies of the house of Cameron, and some ancient plate. Most of the family's valuable possessions, however, are stored in New York in the care of the present head of the house. Young Lord Fairfax does not go into society to any extent. Many doors would be open to him, but he prefers the company of old acquaintances.

His ambition is not to go to England and take his seat in the House of Lords, to which he is entitled, but to become a banker and acquire wealth sufficient to restore the glories of old Fairfax in the South.

COOKING SULTAN'S FOOD.

The food for the Sultan of Turkey is cooked by one man and his assistants, and no others touch it. It is cooked in silver vessels, and when done, each kettle is sealed by a slip of paper, and a stamp and this is broken in the presence of the Sultan by the High Chamberlain, who takes one spoonful from each separate kettle before the Sultan tastes it. This is to guard against poison. The Sultan never uses a plate. He rarely uses a knife or fork—a spoon, his bread, a pancake, or fingers are found far handier. It requires just twice as many slaves as there are courses to serve a dinner to him.